000 The quality of rubber exported from Sibu varies from RSS No. 2 to 5,
• 383 with the largest number of sheets being in grades 3 and 4. Most rubber planted by Ibans receives low prices because it contains impurities or, in
[476] some instances, is unsmoked. Many longhouses have built cooperative smokehouses so that the profit for smoking their rubber goes to them rather than to a middleman.

3. Timber

000 Sarawak has been described as a "timber-rich state," and the affluence of Sibu of the past two decades derives largely from the timber industry. The importance of and extent to which the timber industry has exploited resources within the Sibu District is indicated by the map on the following page[A] giving locations of logging companies and sawmills, [469] and the Table of Timber Exports on the second page[B]. These operations have brought immense wealth to owners and shareholders[26] and also provide employment to several thousand indigenes, principally Melanaus[27] and Ibans, and even more Chinese.

The value of Bornean timbers has long been recognized. As early as 1870, belian, the famous rot-resistant and highly impervious ironwood, was being exported from the Kanowit area to Hong Kong by Cantonese loggers. But the trade was spasmodic as there was no consistent demand for the timbers beyond the local market. Even up until the Second World War,

A, [The map is on the previous pages, 43A-C--An.]
B, [Table 3--pages 45A-47--Analyst]

[26] Until 1963 these were Chinese, and since then, some have been opened by indigenes, others jointly between Chinese and indigenes.

[27] Timber operators state a preference for Melanaus who, unlike Ibans, are less apt to take off because of a bad dream, omen bird, or other dangerous sign.

[Text Continued on Page 48]